

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0414
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCAREST
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUCHAREST 4656

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, SHUM, RO, AU, US
SUBJECT: CONTINUED ROMANIAN MEDIA ATTACKS ON EMIGRATION
TO THE UNITED STATES AND TRAIKIRCHEN

REFS: (A) BUCHAREST 3633; (B) BUCHAREST 2451 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: TWO MORE MAJOR ARTICLES HAVE RECENTLY APPEARED
IN ROMANIAN PRESS ATTACKING EMIGRATION TO THE U.S. AND
SITUATION IN TRAIKIRCHEN REFUGEE CAMP NEAR VIENNA. THE
FIRST, APPEARING IN JUNE 8 SOCIALIST UNITY FRONT WEEKLY
"FLACARA," IS CONFESSION OF DOCTOR KNOWN TO EMBASSY WHO
EMIGRATED TO THE U.S. IN JULY 1976 AND RETURNED IN MAY 1978,
HAVING BEEN FRUSTRATED IN EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A GOOD JOB IN
MEDICAL FIELD. SECOND ARTICLE, IN JUNE 15 FOREIGN AFFAIRS
WEEKLY "LUMEA," EXCERPTS AUSTRIAN NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT ON
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SITUATION IN TRAIKIRCHEN, INCLUDING REPORT OF UNREST AMONG
REFUGEES IN LATE MAY. AUTHOR OF "FLACARA" ARTICLE AND OTHER
OFFICIALS COMMENT THAT THE STORIES ARE SIMPLY "PART OF
ANTI-EMIGRATION PROPAGANDA," WITH MESSAGE CLEAR THAT THEY
ARE NOT CALLING INTO QUESTION RECENT IMPROVED GOR PERFORMANCE ON
EMIGRATION TO THE U.S. COMMENTS ARE FIRST SUCH OFFICIAL ADMISSION
WE HAVE HEARD, AND CONFIRM OUR EARLIER SUSPICIONS (REF A)

THAT GOR IS USING SUCH PRESS STORIES TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ANTI-EMIGRATION POSTURE, TO DOWNPLAY INCREASED PASSPORT ISSUANCE FOR THE U.S., AND TO DISCOURAGE OTHER POTENTIAL APPLICANTS FROM SEEKING TO EMIGRATE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE RETURN OF DR. VITU. JUNE 8 "FLACARA" CARRIES HALF-PAGE QUASI FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT ON DR. MARIN VITU, AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING BUCHAREST PHYSICIAN WHO EMIGRATED TO THE U.S. WITH WIFE IN JULY 1976. ABANDONING HUSBAND'S "FRUITFUL WORK AND UNANIMOUS APPRECIATION" (BY PEERS) AND WIFE'S AGED MOTHER, COUPLE WENT TO HOUSTON. A "SO-CALLED UNCLE" IN NEW YORK PROVED UNABLE TO HELP THEM, AND VITU, THEN 55, WAS FRUSTRATED IN JOB-SEEKING BY "IMPOSSIBLE" MEDICAL EXAMS FOR FOREIGN DOCTORS (WHICH HE CLAIMED HE HAD UNDERSTOOD FROM AMERICAN EMBASSY TO BE "A SIMPLE ENOUGH MATTER") AND BY DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FOREIGN DOCTORS. AFTER SEVEN MONTHS WITHOUT A JOB, VITU WAS HIRED AS A RESEARCH ASSISTANT AT SOUTHERN TEXAS UNIVERSITY, BUT WAS ALLEGEDLY REPLACED BY AN AMERICAN STUDENT WILLING TO WORK FOR LESS MONEY. DEMORALIZED BY INABILITY TO EARN A FRACTION OF AN AMERICAN DOCTOR'S SALARY, AND BY HIS UNEMPLOYMENT WHILE THERE WERE 9,000 PEOPLE FOR ONE DOCTOR IN THE AREA, VITU DECIDED TO RETURN. ROMANIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WAS KIND AND HELPFUL, AND THE COUPLE CAME BACK, "EXHAUSTED BY ALMOST TWO YEARS OF STRUGGLES, BY SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL TORMENTS."

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3. STORY IS SIMILAR TO ACCOUNT BY FORMER EMIGRANT TO U.S. PUBLISHED IN MAY 18 "FLACARA" (REF A) BY SAME AUTHOR, DUMITRU GRAUR. VITU AND WIFE WERE INDEED ISSUED NON-PREFERENCE IMMIGRANT VISAS IN JUNE 1976; FILE IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE, BUT CONSULAR SECTION LOCAL EMPLOYEES RECALL VITU AS A SHY, INDECISIVE MAN WHOSE WIFE WAS MORE INTERESTED IN EMIGRATING THAN HE.

4. TRAIKIRCHEN. JUNE 15 "LUMEA" CARRIES ACCOUNT ON TRAIKIRCHEN CONDITIONS BASED ON EXCERPTS FROM STORY IN MAY 28 VIENNA "KURIER." "LUMEA" ARTICLE, ENTITLED "FROM THE NIGHTMARISH LIFE OF THE UPROOTED," CENTERS ON LATE MAY INCIDENT AT TRAIKIRCHEN ("THE LARGEST 'CIVIL WAR' IN THE CAMP'S EXISTENCE") IN WHICH FIGHT BROKE OUT BETWEEN NATIONAL GROUPS. ACCORDING TO "LUMEA," SHOTS WERE EXCHANGED AND GASOLINE BOMBS PREPARED BY COMBATANTS; "KURIER" QUOTE STATES THAT 30 POLICE WITH DOGS WERE REQUIRED TO RESTORE ORDER. ACCORDING TO "LUMEA," REFUGEES ARE TERRORIZED BY KNIFE-WIELDING CAMP INHABITANTS, MANY OF WHOM WERE CRIMINALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES. "LUMEA" REHEARSES VIEWS OF TRAIKIRCHEN PREVIOUSLY AIRED IN ROMANIAN PRESS (REF B): I.E., POOR FOOD (COFFEE AND STALE BREAD FOR BREAKFAST,

POTATIOES AND NOODLES FOR LUNCH AND DINNER); FILTHY
SANITARY FACILITIES; MISERABLE STIPENDS GIVEN TO REFUGEES.
THE REFUGEE IS PORTRAYED AS AN AIMLESS WANDERER "WHO,
IN A MOMENT OF MADNESS, ABANDONED THE SOIL OF HIS COUNTRY,
HIS RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, TO ARRIVE IN THE INFERNO OF
TRAISKIRCHEN, FROM WHENCE MORE TERRIBLE ORDEALS AWAIT
HIM."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUCHAREST 4656

5. COMMENT. STORIES ON TRAIKIRCHEN AND FIRST-PERSON
ACCOUNTS OF RETURNED EMIGRANTS MAKE ANTI-EMIGRATION MESSAGE
CLEAR WITHOUT GROSSLY OFFENDING RECIPIENT WESTERN COUNTRIES
THEMSELVES. WHILE ARTICLE ON RETURNED DOCTOR HAS NEGATIVE
TONE ABOUT THE U.S., IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT ARTICLES DOWN-
PLAY THE SIREN-SONG OF WESTERN EMIGRATION PROPAGANDA, AND
INSTEAD EMPHASIZE THE MADNESS OF SAILORS FOOLISH ENOUGH
TO LISTEN.
6. DISTANCE WAS PUT BETWEEN ARTICLES AND RECENT IM-
PROVED GOR PERFORMANCE ON EMIGRATION TO THE U.S. IN
JUNE 29 MEETING OF EMBOFFS WITH "FLACARA" ESECRETARY-GAWERAL
NICOLAU AND AUTHOR GRAUR. PRESS ATTACHE AND CONSUL WERE TOLD
THAT PURPOSE OF ARTICLES IS TO SUPPORT GOR POLICY IN

DISCOURAGING EMIGRATION AND NOT TO CRITICIZE THE U.S.
OR TO JEOPARDIZE BILATERAL RELATIONS. "FLACARA" REPRESENTS
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SENTATIVES MAINTAINED THAT WIDESPREAD KNOWLEDGE IN ROMANIA OF ATTRACTIVE OFFERS OF EMIGRATION TO THE U.S. OBVIATES NEED FOR EDITORIAL BALANCE, AND CONFERS OBLIGATION TO POINT OUT REALITIES WHICH MIGHT DISCOURAGE ROMANIANS WHO ARE CONSIDERING EMIGRATION. EMBOFFS WERE TOLD THAT ARTICLES ABOUT TRAISKIRCHEN ARE SIMPLY "PART OF ANTI-EMIGRATION PROPAGANDA AND A GOOD EXAMPLE OF PROBLEMS FACED BY MANY EMIGRANTS." SIMILAR POSITION WAS TAKEN BY PASSPORT DIRECTOR POPESCU ON JUNE 12. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM POLOFF ABOUT ARTICLES, POPESCU SAID THAT "PROPAGANDA ABOUT EMIGRATION CONTINUES ON BOTH SIDES." WHILE HE ALLOWED THAT THE TIMING OF THE ARTICLES MIGHT LOGICALLY SEEM CURIOUS, POPESCU IMPLIED THAT WE SHOULD ATTACH NO SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THEM SINCE THEY ARE PART OF ONGOING GOR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. MFA CONSULAR DIRECTORATE OFFICIALS ALSO DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE ANY LINKAGE BETWEEN ARTICLES AND RECENT ISSUANCE OF PASSPORTS IN MANY LONG-STANDING EMIGRATION CASES.

7. ABOVE COMMENTS CONFIRM OUR SUSPICIOUS (REF A) THAT PUBLIC GOR ANTI-EMIGRATION PROPAGANDA TENDS TO INTENSIFY AT PRECISELY THE TIMES OF GREATEST ACCOMMODATION WITH SUCH INTERESTED FOREIGN PARTIES AS THE US, FRG, AND ISRAEL. CAMPAIGN SERVES BOTH TO REAFFIRM GOR'S "PRINCIPLED" OPPOSITION TO EMIGRATION PER SE AND TO DISCOURAGE ADDITIONAL PASSPORT SEEKERS.
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